



# EUROMED PRACTICAL GUIDE

How to develop an EVS project  
in the EuroMed Region ?



SALTO-YOUTH EuroMed Resource Centre  
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## PART I

### WHAT IS EURO-MED YOUTH PROGRAMME IV?

Within the framework of the Barcelona Process and the European Neighbourhood Policy, the Youth in Action Programme continues with its third phase 2007-2013. Alongside, the Euro-Med Youth programme IV will also start by the end of 2010. As indicated by the number IV in its title, this programme was preceded by 3 other programmes.

The EURO-MED YOUTH Programme facilitates **intercultural dialogue and non-formal education\* activities** for young people between the ages of 15 and 30, from 36 Euro-Mediterranean partners (i.e. the 27 Member States of the European Union and 9 Mediterranean countries\*\*): Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia. It is a tool to prepare future generations for closer cooperation at Euro-Mediterranean level, based on mutual respect and tolerance.

#### The general objective of the EuroMed Youth Programme Phase IV is:

- To support and strengthen participation in and contribution to the development of civil society and democracy by youth organisations and young people from the Euro-Mediterranean region.

#### The specific objectives are:

- To stimulate and encourage mutual understanding between young people within the Euro-Mediterranean region and to fight against stereotypes and prejudices
- To promote active citizenship among young people and enhance their sense of solidarity
- To contribute to the development of youth policies in the different partner countries.

### WHAT IS EURO-MEDITERRANEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE?

- Euro-Mediterranean Voluntary Service (E.V.S.) is part of the Youth in Action Programme of the European Commission and the EuroMed Youth Programme.
- EVS enables young people to carry out voluntary service for up to 12 months in a country other than their own.
- Each EVS project is based on an international partnership composed of a Sending Organisation, a Host Organisation and volunteer/s. The Sending organisation and the volunteer must come from the same country, while the hosting organisation must be from a different country. Its most basic form is thus a bilateral long term international partnership between 2 organisations that come from the 2 different sides of the Mediterranean.

\* Definition of Non formal learning (from the Youth in Action programme guide, page 6): "Non Formal Learning (NFL) refers to the learning which takes place outside formal educational curriculum. Non-formal learning activities involve people on a voluntary basis and are carefully planned, to foster the participants' personal and social development". NFL also has a participative and learner centered approach and is considered as complimentary to Formal education. [http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc/how\\_to\\_participate/programme\\_guide\\_10/guide\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc/how_to_participate/programme_guide_10/guide_en.pdf)

\*\* List of signatories to the Phase III (2006-2009), subject to signing for Phase IV

## Practical guide

The applicant organisation decides which program to use to apply for such a project. If the applicant organisation is in the south then the programme to be used is the Euro-Med Youth Programme. If the applicant organisation is in the north, then the programme to be used is Youth in Action.

If the applicant organisation  
is a Mediterranean Partner Country



Apply to: Euro-Med Youth Programme.

If the applicant organisation  
is a Programme Country



Apply to: Youth in Action Programme.

Either the hosting (HO) or sending (SO) organisation can be the applicant organisation (although it is preferable that the host organisation applies since it will be responsible for the lion's share of the funding).

- Please note what is **NOT** EVS:  
Occasional, unstructured, part-time volunteering. An internship in an enterprise. A period of study or vocational training abroad. A paid job (an EVS project must not replace paid jobs & it cannot be an exploitation of a cheap workforce). A recreational or tourist activity. A language course.
- Duration: There are two kinds of EVS in terms of duration: EVS for "Young people with fewer opportunities": starting from 2 weeks  
Long Term EVS: 3 - 12 months.
- Like any other project, there are stages to follow for an EVS project, covering preparation, implementation and evaluation. Each stage can be broken down into different steps to ensure a quality EVS project. In the following pages we will go through the different phases in an EVS project, looking particularly at the specificity of Euro-Med Voluntary Service and at how to work around it for optimal results.

**SOUND EXCITING? TRUST ME;  
IT IS WORTH FINDING OUT MORE, SO READ ON ...**

\* Please refer to page 6 for more information on "Young people with fewer opportunities"



## PART II

### WHAT IS MEANT BY VOLUNTARY SERVICE IN THE EVS CONTEXT?

#### Learning service - mobility - solidarity

EVS can be described as "a learning service" carried out through non-formal learning experiences where the volunteers improve and acquire competences for their personal, educational and professional development.

EVS gives young people the chance to move to & live in a different country in order to learn, which for many reasons is not always easy between the north and the south.

Working and serving a different community than their own reinforces the importance of solidarity among young people and highlights the value of social responsibility for the volunteers concerned.

If we look at each of these three points in the context of EuroMed cooperation, we can see how the Euro-Mediterranean Voluntary service can provide a unique chance for young people from both sides of the Mediterranean to reflect on themselves, their values and different ways of working and to genuinely learn about each other. In today's world, with its negative stereotypes and vocal hostility, we need to take advantage of every opportunity to stop and reflect.

### STEPS TO ENSURE A HIGH QUALITY EURO-MEDITERRANEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE (EVS) PROJECT

#### Preparation:

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### STEPS FOR PREPARATION:

#### 1-Becoming ready as an organisation

**Key word: Reflect**

#### European organisations:

In order to be able to take part in an EVS project (send or host), you need to be an accredited organisation. For more information on how to get your accreditation and feature in the database, please go to <http://ec.europa.eu/youth/evs/aod> and visit your National Agency's website. When filling in the accreditation form (Expression of Interest), you will be asked to reflect on all the questions below:

- Why do you want to host or send an EVS volunteer?
- Do other members in your organisation share this view?
- What can you, as an organisation, offer and what will the added value be for your organisation and community?
- What does it mean to be a volunteer in your community?
- How open is your organisation to learning?  
What does your organisation understand by Non formal and informal learning?
- Does it make a difference if the volunteer is male or female?

Reflecting on all these questions is not a waste of time, as you will be sharing your positions, first with your partner and then with the volunteer, which is why you & your organisation need to be clear on where you stand.

#### 2-Finding your partner

**Key word: Network sensibly**

#### European organisations:

The fact that there is no accreditation system for south of the Mediterranean organisations (Mediterranean organisations) makes it difficult for European organisations looking for partners in the south. This issue has been partially resolved by the EuroMed Youth platform\* <http://www.euromedp.org/>, which lists all organisations and indicates whether they are interested in EVS. You can also refer to the EuroMed Youth Units (EMYU) (which act as National agencies in Mediterranean partner countries). <http://www.euromedyouth.net>. They should be able to advise on which organisations are reliable.

Alternatively, you can find partners through contact making seminars or by reactivating earlier contacts made with members from potential organisations or by asking them to recommend reliable organisations in their country.

Use technology! Here are some links to EuroMed meeting sites:

The Salto Euro-Med website: <http://www.salto-youth.net/rc/euromed/>

The EuroMed IV programme website: <http://www.euromedyouth.net>

You can also use Facebook or publish an open call AHEAD of time. Finding your partner is a crucial step and is the foundation for all the work that follows so give it proper time, care and investigation. This will save you a lot of time and energy in the future.

\*There is no monitoring body to check out this information locally such as already exists for European partner countries.



While doing the above, keep asking yourself the following: Is this a person that I can work with for the next (at least) 18 months? Is this an organisation I can trust to be a good hosting placement for my volunteer? Why?

Your volunteer can be chosen before or after you choose your partner and submit the project. Any young person between 18-30 years of age, regardless of their social, cultural, educational background, is a potential volunteer. You also need to keep in mind yours and the hosting organisation expectations & profile and the interests of the volunteer and make sure they coincide.

## SPECIAL NOTE

**EVS** is open to **young people with Fewer Opportunities**. The definition of young people with Fewer Opportunities (according to Youth in Action Programme Guide, page 5) is: "young people who are at a disadvantage compared to their peers because they face one or more of the situations of the non exhaustive list below. In certain contexts, these obstacles prevent young people from having effective access to formal and non formal education, transnational mobility & participation and inclusion in society at large". Examples: economic, cultural, health, disability or educational obstacles.

**In a Euro-Med context:** There have been many discussions on the different notions of "People with Fewer Opportunities" in EuroMed activities. Most Mediterranean partner country volunteers (in other cases participants) are considered privileged in their home countries: they have a higher education background, speak one foreign language and most can afford to pay 30% of their travel costs, which places them in a very good situation compared to many other young people in their countries. They are NOT privileged, however; in terms of mobility, access to advancements in life and exposure to other cultures. Without the Euro-Med Youth Programme, many of these young people would have never had the chance to leave their own country, which is not often the case for European volunteers. Thus the meaning given to the word "unprivileged" can have different meanings in different contexts, hence the discussions. While building the partnership, it is very important to reflect on these issues with your partner; since any application for an EVS for "People with Fewer Opportunities" for a volunteer who does not fit the criteria of the programme will be refused.

### 3-Building the partnership

**Key word: Communication, coordination**

Once you have decided to host/send a volunteer and found your partner, you are ready to start building the partnership. We are assuming here that this is the simplest form of EVS i.e a "bilateral" partnership with 1 sending organisation, 1 hosting organisation and 1 volunteer.

**Please note that both communication & coordination is done at a distance so remember these tips:**

Be honest when describing your organisation & community, talk about what it IS, not what you would like to be.

Be realistic on what you can do in terms of work and deadlines to ensure efficiency.

Agree on the code of rules from the BEGINNING and do not change them without consultation.

Show good will to build a solid partnership. Be accountable!  
Remember, it is not easy but it CAN BE DONE!

# Practical guide

Ideally, the application should be filled in by both the sending & hosting organisation. Note, however, that only one of them will be the applicant organisation. Here is a rough breakdown of the main tasks for both sending & hosting organisations:

### Sending organisation (SO) tasks

Inform volunteer on EVS & help find a potential host organisation.

### Hosting organisation (HO) tasks

Prepare the description of activities for the volunteer.

Select the volunteer.

Think about accommodation costs, language courses, food and local transportation.

### Shared tasks

Prepare the project application.

Prepare the "activity agreement"\* together with the volunteer.

## SPECIAL NOTE

### Three IMPORTANT points to remember:

- 1- Remember, this is the Euro-Mediterranean Voluntary service, so if the **intercultural aspect** represents 20% for any other project, it should be at least double here! In order to avoid disappointment for either side (SO, HO) or the volunteer, you need to be **very clear** on this point with your partner during the preparation phase. While it is impossible to always avoid misunderstandings, it is crucial to make sure you both understand and respect each other's culture and traditions. It is important to ensure that your volunteer (male or female) is placed in a place where they are **safe and comfortable** so that they can learn and grow and also contribute to the community. For more information regarding intercultural learning: [http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/publications/T-kits/4/Tkit\\_4\\_EN](http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/publications/T-kits/4/Tkit_4_EN)
- 2- It is important to find the right balance between learning and service for the volunteer and for your organisation (especially if you are hosting). Remember that the volunteer is not an unpaid staff member. He or she should be involved in an already up and running project, or they can establish a new one based on their capabilities & interests if they wish so. As a HO you need to prepare a detailed example of a weekly schedule for the volunteer that demonstrates the balance between the learning and service aspects and that satisfies both the organisation and the selected volunteer.
- 3- The budget for the project must be realistic and correspond to the actual activities described in the application. For more information regarding this issue: [http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/publications/T-kits/9/Tkit\\_9\\_EN](http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/publications/T-kits/9/Tkit_9_EN)

Once the application form is ready, the applicant organisation applies within one of the defined deadlines (check the User's Guide). Note that the date for the start of the project is the date when the first costs of the project are incurred (and NOT the date when the volunteer arrives at the hosting placement). When working with the Euro-Med voluntary Service, it is BEST to allow for some time between the acceptance of the project and the start.

\*The Activity Agreement is a document that is prepared and signed in original by all sides involved in the EVS project: the organisations + the volunteer. This document is regarded as a CONTRACT signed by all parties and should be respected.



4-Time between signing the contract and the implementation of the project

Key Word: Stamina

**Sending Organisation (SO)**

- A)** Find a volunteer (if already done, ignore this step).
- B)** Prepare the volunteer: Pre-departure training. Pre-Departure Training is a 2-3 day training session that aims to prepare volunteers in their home countries before starting their service in a different country. They mainly concentrate on the rights and responsibilities of volunteers, along with some intercultural input. Not all organisations/countries in the EuroMed area are able to provide pre-departure training and on arrival training. Discuss this with your partner and if they cannot provide it, seek help: provide the volunteer with some documents or make sure he/she is well prepared from your end (either pre-departure or on arrival). In both cases all partners (SO, HO) should provide the same information to the volunteer to avoid confusion.
- C)** Prepare insurance procedures.

**Hosting Organisation (HO)**

- A)** Prepare to welcome the volunteer (this includes preparing accommodation & language courses, thinking about food and local transportation).
- B)** Make sure your organisation is ready to co-exist and cooperate with a new team member from a different country. Reflect with the members on their perceptions of the new volunteer and his/her culture and their role in integrating him/her into the community. It is important at this stage to discuss the traditions and norms of your community and how to ensure mutual respect.
- C)** Finetune the activities of the volunteer. Check that you have made all the necessary preparations both in your organisation & locally.
- D)** The HO should nominate **two** people to support the volunteer: Task-related support person: Supervisor Personal/community support: Mentor. The Supervisor is a person working in the organisation and assigned by the HO to explain the work tasks to the volunteer. The Mentor does not necessarily need to be working in the HO. He is the person who assists the volunteer on a personal level, reflecting with the volunteer on his/her experience and introducing him/her into the community.

**Shared tasks**

Both help the volunteer to obtain his/her visa. Please note that this process takes TIME for volunteers hosted in Europe. It is extremely important to prepare the volunteer well and to have the support of BOTH organisations. Support starts by keeping up to date with the constant changes in visa regulations to ensure the correct signed supporting documents are completed prior to visa appointments.

**IMPLEMENTATION:**

5-Implementation of the Project

Key word: Learning for all

**Relationship between the volunteer & (HO)\***

- The first thing to check is that the volunteer is properly welcomed to the country, community & organisation, including sleeping & eating well.
- This is an important stage as you are introducing the pattern for the volunteer's new life.
- Remember the learning versus service equation: Don't expect the volunteer to start producing from Day 1. Give him/her some time to find out about things & settle down, but don't wait TOO long! EVS is not a holiday. The volunteer can be called on to handle some tasks once fully oriented into the working environment.
- The relationship should be continuously monitored by the Supervisor and the mentor assigned by the (HO).

**Training & learning**

- In theory (but not always into practice) the HO is responsible for sending the volunteer to On arrival training & Mid term evaluations\*. These training sessions are very important because they provide to the volunteer an opportunity to reflect on his/her learning experience in addition to allowing him/her to meet other volunteers. Some countries do not have the capacity to organise such training sessions. If this is your case, please make sure you nevertheless provide the volunteer with the content of such training sessions.
- The Mentor is the person responsible for helping the volunteer reflect on what has been learnt either in the formal (organisation) or informal (the community or everyday life) spheres. He/ she also plays a major role in helping the volunteer to understand the culture of the new community and getting through the phases of discomfort during the service.

**Intercultural Learning**

- Leaving home, friends & country and going alone to another country, meeting new people & working in a different community is a fairly momentous step for the volunteer.
- As a HO, it is important to remember all the stereotypes & the uncertainties that the volunteer may be feeling and experiencing.
- It is important to reflect on these issues in order to transform them into learning experiences instead of culture shock.
- For EuroMed Voluntary Service the exchange is between quite different cultures. It is important to maintain respect for the culture of the hosting community and to deal with the challenges the volunteer may be experiencing.
- The earlier language courses are started the better. A volunteer's better understanding of the host country language is reflected in his/her personal satisfaction & productivity at work.
- Finally, remember that intercultural learning is not just learning about another culture, it is also learning about one's own culture when contrasted with another one. This notion is not always easy to grasp. Also remember that no culture is superior to another culture. To read more on this issue: [http://youth-partnership-eu.eo.int/youth-partnership/publications/T-kits/4/Tkit\\_4\\_EN](http://youth-partnership-eu.eo.int/youth-partnership/publications/T-kits/4/Tkit_4_EN)

\* Please note that both the (HO) and the Sending organisation (SO) should remain in contact with the volunteer throughout the whole duration of the service. Other support systems can be the mentor, the supervisor, other EVS volunteers and the National Agency of Youth Programme or the Euro-Med Youth Unit.

**\* On-arrival training**

On-arrival training takes place upon arrival in the host country. It introduces volunteers to their host country and their host environment, and helps them to meet and get to know each other. It contributes to networking, so to mobility. Duration is on average seven days.

**Mid-term evaluation (compulsory only for Services lasting more than 4 months)**

Mid-term evaluation provides volunteers with an opportunity to evaluate their experience so far, as well as to meet other volunteers from different projects throughout the host country. Duration is on average two and a half days.



 **EVALUATION:**

**6-Evaluation, Follow up and Recognition**

**Key word: Conceptualising**

**Monitoring and Evaluation:**

Like any other project, an EVS project must be evaluated. Evaluation goes hand in hand with monitoring. It is also important to recognise that both monitoring and evaluation are continuous processes that BOTH organisations and the volunteer have to perform from DAY 1 of the project. For more information on Evaluation in general: [http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/publications/Tkits/10/Tkit\\_10\\_EN](http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/publications/Tkits/10/Tkit_10_EN)

The aim of this step is to conceptualise the learning process, learn from what works and build on what can be done better:

Through continuous monitoring and the volunteer's attendance at the Mid-term Evaluation meeting, the project can be tweaked and small issues taken care of before they become big and hard to manage.

It is the responsibility of the SO to make sure that the volunteer attends the Final Evaluation meeting\* (if it is carried out). If this is not the case, seek help on holding a one to one session in your own organisation.

Both organisations (SO-HO) & the volunteer prepare the final report, although the process is initiated & coordinated by the HO.

**What needs to be evaluated in an EVS project?**

An easy answer would be to follow each step mentioned above and evaluate them. Here is a rough guide on what to evaluate:

Cooperation between the SO and the HO and quality of preparation for the project - performance of the volunteer in his/her tasks + personal learning outcomes - level of satisfaction are the tasks

for the volunteer and the beneficiaries of the tasks - impact of the project on the HO community - quality of the arrangements made by the HO (food, accommodation, language course, mentor...).

**Follow up:**

Numbers and surveys show that EVS volunteers always learn something from their EVS experience and make use of it in the future.

The SO has an important role in re-integrating the volunteer into his/her original community. It should also work towards making use of all the energy and ideas that volunteers often have for their own future, organisation or community, following their project. It can be very beneficial for the SO to provide the space for such initiatives to see the light.

This is often a weak point for Mediterranean organisations, so it should be given some thought.

**Recognition:**

Every EVS volunteer is entitled to a certificate to document their learning experience and their participation in such a programme. Volunteers doing their service in Programme countries are eligible for a Youth Pass <http://www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/>. Volunteers doing their service in a Mediterranean partner country can obtain a certificate from their organisation and from the EuroMed Youth Unit in the country of service.

 **SOME USEFUL LINKS:**

- The Euro-Med Youth Programme: <http://www.euromedyouth.net/>
- Salto-Youth EuroMed Resource Centre: <http://www.salto-youth.net/euromed/>
- Youth in Action Programme Guide: [www.ec.europa.eu/youth](http://www.ec.europa.eu/youth)
- The database of accredited organizations: [http://ec.europa.eu/youth/evs/aod/hei\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/evs/aod/hei_en.cfm)
- The Partnership between Council of Europe and European Commission on Euro-Mediterranean cooperation: <http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/index.html>
- Training kits on different topics, in different languages: Project management, Intercultural learning, Education, Evaluation in youth work and others: [http://youth-partnership.coe.int/youth-partnership/publications/Tkits/T\\_kits](http://youth-partnership.coe.int/youth-partnership/publications/Tkits/T_kits)
- T-Kit No. 11 - Mosaic: The training kit for Euro-Mediterranean youth work (2010) [http://book.coe.int/EN/ficheouvrage.php?PAGEID=36&lang=EN&produit\\_aliasid=2482](http://book.coe.int/EN/ficheouvrage.php?PAGEID=36&lang=EN&produit_aliasid=2482)
- Publication on 2 years (2007-2008) of Euro-Mediterranean youth Cooperation. Projects implemented in Euro-Med Youth III <http://www.salto-youth.net/rc/euromed/EMlibrary/EMYCoop0708/>
- "Education and Civilisation: Influence on EVS" - EuroMed Educational Report Collection «Bringing both sides together» <http://www.salto-youth.net/reportscollection/>
- Report on a EVS training session [http://www.ungdomsstyrelsen.se/ad2/user\\_documents/Report\\_EVS\\_EuroMed\\_Finland.pdf](http://www.ungdomsstyrelsen.se/ad2/user_documents/Report_EVS_EuroMed_Finland.pdf)
- Publication on EVS from the Salto-Youth South East Europe Resource Centre: [http://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-2006/HopscotchtoQualityinEVS-7ok\(2\).pdf](http://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-2006/HopscotchtoQualityinEVS-7ok(2).pdf)
- "How to make an EVS" - video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nbPmJV0zHo>
- Articles from "Meet In EuroMed", the magazine of Salto-Youth EuroMed: <http://www.salto-youth.net/meetineuromed/>
  - "EVS as a Tool for Human Development" - Meet in Euro-Med Magazine Issue # 13 (2009) pages 12 & 13.
  - "An Active Discovery of EVS" - Meet In EuroMed Magazine Issue # 7 (2006) pages 7 & 8.
  - "EuroMed Voluntary service comes to Kfar Vradim, Israel" - Meet In EuroMed Magazine Issue # 5. (2005) page 14.
  - "A Thousand and One Nights, EVS in EuroMed countries" - Meet In EuroMed Magazine Issue # 5. (2005) page 15.
  - "EuroMed Voluntary Service: from Portugal to Jordan" - Meet In EuroMed Magazine Issue # 3. (2004) page 12.
  - "My Voluntary Service in Morocco" - Meet In EuroMed Magazine" Issue # 2. (2004) pages 12 & 13.
  - "This is the story of the EVS-Meda Training in Finland 2003" - Meet In EuroMed Magazine Issue # 1. (2003) pages 6 & 7.

\*The Final Evaluation meeting is a meeting carried out by the National Agency in the country of origin or by SO to reintegrate the volunteer in the sending country and to discuss future plans of the volunteer in his/her community

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